

Co-Sleeping: Should Your Child Sleep In Your Bed?

Co-sleeping is the practice where the child sleeps in bed with his parents. Not surprisingly, it is one of the most hotly debated and controversial topics related to pediatric sleep. Let's see why.

Some people argue that co-sleeping is the right and natural way to raise a child because the practice fosters a stronger bond and a more secure attachment.

Conversely, others will tell you that co-sleeping is risky, ridiculous, or even dangerous and they don't want it for their family.

So, which approach holds the truth?

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First, it's important to understand that co-sleeping is not magic. Although some proponents of the family bed would disagree, numerous couples have reported that their babies did not necessarily sleep deeper or longer because their parents were close by. In fact, some parents found that their child slept longer and woke less frequently when they stopped co-sleeping and moved him into his own crib.

However, whether families choose to co-sleep or have their children sleep independently is a personal decision, and if both parents and child are safe, rested, and fulfilled, then co-sleeping is nothing to worry about.

If you decide do co-sleep, this commitment requires some very careful thinking about what you and your spouse feel is right for you as individuals, as a couple, and as a family.

Ask yourselves the following questions:

- Is it nice to think about enjoying the coziness of sleeping in close proximity, or does one or more of us tend to stay active during sleeping – potentially disrupting the others?
- Does everyone in our family want to co-sleep, or are we leaning toward it because one of us feels strongly?
- Are we willing to commit to being quiet after our child falls asleep, or do we like to watch TV or talk in bed?
- Will we enjoy being able to feed our baby more often throughout the night, or will having him next to us make it tougher to wean nighttime feeds?

- Are we agreeable to getting into bed when our child does, to ensure his safety?

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- For working parents, does sleeping next to our child allow us to feel more connected to him?

As expected, co-sleeping has both advantages and disadvantages.

Let's take a closer look at them.

Advantages:

- Constant closeness whenever the child is awake. Many children and parents enjoy this feeling.
- Immediate action and support for any sleep-related problem
- The ability to nurse and respond to other nighttime wakings without getting up
- More time to spend with the child
- Possibly better sleep for both the child and the parents, if the child was sleeping poorly to begin with

Disadvantages:

- Parents may sleep poorly if their children are restless sleepers
- Parents may end up sleeping in separate rooms, and they may become angry at their child or with each other
- Children's and adults' sleep cycles do not coincide
- Parents may have to go to bed at a very early hour with their children and be left with little time for their own evening activities
- Parents have little privacy
- There may be a slight increase in the risk to the infant from SIDS and related causes.

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The decision to co-sleep should be yours, made by the parent – or parents – and based on your own personal philosophies, not on pressure from your child or anyone else. Another family's good or bad experience with co-sleeping should not influence your decision: your child is unique and your family is not the same.

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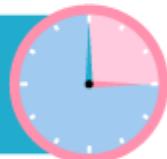
ASTONISHING FACTS ABOUT BABY SLEEP



In the **1980's**, the average parent lost **340 hours of sleep** in the first year of a newborn's life.

You lose **three times more sleep** than your parents as this number has risen to over **1050** in **2015**.

THE AVERAGE PARENT LOSES
3 HOURS OF SLEEP EVERY NIGHT



WHAT ARE THE DANGERS OF THIS TREND?

Adult depression rose from 3% to 18% in the last 35 years



67% of couples come close to divorce in the first 3 years of a baby's life with **lack of sleep** as one of the main reasons



71,000 are injured and 1550 die each year in accidents caused by drowsy driving



WHAT ARE THE COSTS OF THIS TREND?

How much does a good night's sleep save you?

